

Statement of Cameron R. Hume
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
October 24, 2001

Mr. Chairman:

It is an honor for me to appear before you as President Bush's nominee to be ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. I would like to thank the President and Secretary of State Powell for the confidence they have shown by selecting me for this position.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge my wife Rigmor Spang, who is here today, and my four daughters, who are in school in New York. With your permission I would like to thank them for the support they have given to me, especially when I have been serving on the front lines in places like Beirut and Algiers.

During more than thirty years of government service, I have often worked on African affairs. After a tour as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Libya, I joined the Foreign Service in 1970. From 1978 to 1980 I worked as the Department's desk officer for South Africa, a tour that introduced me to the challenges and potential of that great country. In the years that followed I was repeatedly involved in U.S. diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts in Africa -- negotiating UN resolutions that set up the mechanisms for Namibia's independence, serving as the U.S. representative to the talks that ended Mozambique's civil war, working with the government of Algeria to promote the talks that ended the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and most recently, as a member of our delegation to the United Nations, working to resolve conflicts in Angola, Burundi, and the Congo. I firmly believe that U.S. policy can and must make a difference in Africa.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to share with you my initial thoughts on our relations with South Africa. We share similar commitments to democracy, to a free market economy, and to seeking a better future for all our citizens. South Africa, by virtue of its human and material potential, has an important leadership role to play, particularly in its immediate region, and throughout Africa. It is in our interest to work toward a real partnership with the government and people of South Africa in addressing many of these issues.

With your permission, I would like to highlight three areas in which we have much to accomplish by working together. In the area of economic growth, our already strong relationship is expanding, in significant part as a result of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. Both U.S. government agencies, such as U.S. AID, and private firms have important roles to play in this field.

A second area concerns peace and security. We have good and improving relations with the South African government in the area of counter-terrorism. I am aware that several South African citizens died in the attack on the World Trade Center, and I want to express my sympathy for their loss. South Africa has now deployed peace-keeping troops with the UN operation in the Congo, and former President Nelson Mandela is

leading the talks aimed at establishing peace in Burundi. It is in our interest to work with the South African government on such regional security issues.

The third area involves building for a better future for South Africans. In the past decade the South African people showed their greatness as they established a new democracy guaranteeing the human rights of all, without discrimination. This decade brings equally difficult challenges for the people of South Africa, and we should support their efforts in such fields as health care – including HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases – educational opportunity, the environment, and assuring respect for the rule of law. Both the U.S. government and private U.S. companies and non-governmental organizations have active programs in many of these areas, and we should continue to do what we can with our South African partners.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges ahead are both daunting and exciting. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve in such an important position. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to advance our policies and interests in South Africa.

Thank you.